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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEAWJC/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHOND/DIRONDCP WASHDC
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC
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SUBJECT: CODEL MEEKS MEETS WITH PROSECUTOR GENERAL IGUARAN

¶1. (U) June 4, 2007; 200PM, U.S. Embassy

¶2. (U) Participants:

U.S.

Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-NY)
Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA)
Rep. Jean Schmidt (R-OH)
Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-CA)
CDA Milton Drucker
Pol officer (notetaker)

COLOMBIA

Prosecutor General Mario Iguaran
Human Rights Unit Director Leonardo Cabana
Justice and Peace Unit Director Luis Gonzalez
International Affairs Director Francisco Echeverri

Summary

¶3. (SBU) A Congressional delegation led by Representative Gregory Meeks met on June 4 with Prosecutor General's Office (Fiscalia) head Mario Iguaran and senior Fiscalia officials to determine the resources needed to improve the Fiscalia's capacity to pursue high-profile human rights cases and to protect witnesses. Iguaran acknowledged the generous help already provided by the U.S. and welcomed any additional resources that would allow the Fiscalia to do more. Iguaran told the Codel he was lobbying the Colombian Congress to pass the National Development Plan which includes a provision that would increase the Fiscalia's resources and personnel. End Summary

Iguaran's Report Card

¶4. (SBU) Prosecutor General Iguaran said the Fiscalia was committed to report openly on Colombia's justice system. He understood the international community's interest in seeing progress on human rights and labor-related cases, especially

given the US-Colombia Trade Promotion Act pending in the U.S. Congress. Iguaran said the Fiscalia has created a special unit to investigate labor-related violence and seek convictions in cases of violence against union members. Iguaran noted that in the past two years, the Colombian justice system has made significant advances in the implementation of the new accusatory system. He said the Fiscalia has also taken a more aggressive approach in prosecuting human rights cases, citing Jamundi and the ongoing investigation of civilian disappearances attributed to the military following the M-19 terrorist group's seizure of the Supreme Court in 1985.

Greater Resources Needed

¶5. (SBU) Representative Meeks acknowledged Iguaran's excellent reputation in Colombia and the United States, and offered to help the Fiscalia with additional resources to pursue sensitive cases and improve its Witness Protection Program. Iguaran thanked the Codel for the USG's generous assistance, and welcomed new resources to strengthen the Human Rights Unit, Justice and Peace Law Unit, Witness

Protection Program, and the search for mass graves. He said the high cost of implementing the accusatorial system and applying the Justice and Peace Law have boosted both the workload and profile of the Fiscalia. Iguaran said he was lobbying the Colombian Congress to approve a provision in the National Development Plan that would increase the Fiscalia's resources and personnel.

Labor Cases of Great Concern

¶6. (SBU) Representative Sanchez said she was concerned about weak labor rights, and asked Iguaran what was being done to improve the environment for unions. Iguaran said the Ministry of Social Protection was primarily responsible for monitoring labor rights. He added that the Fiscalia had created a labor sub-unit with 13 prosecutors and 78 investigators to investigate violence against unionists. Working with labor organizations, the new Unit identified 200 priority cases to investigate and prosecute. Iguaran said more needs to be done, but cited the new labor Unit as a large step forward.

¶7. (U) House Western Hemisphere Subcommittee Staff cleared this cable.

Drucker